

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OF ST. JOSEPH COUNTY

August 23, 2007

Ms. Mary Levine, Director of Legal Affairs
Michigan State Housing Development Authority
735 East Michigan Avenue
Lansing, MI 48909

RECEIVED
AUG 28 2007
MSHDA-Legal

Re: Michigan's Qualified Allocation Plan

Dear Ms. Levine:

Community Mental Health of St. Joseph County supports all changes to Michigan's Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) that will increase the number of housing units made available to persons who are homeless and/or special needs individuals/families.

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program is one of the largest resources made available to Michigan to create new or rehabilitated affordable units for low income people, and as you may be aware, Michigan's economic climate has increased the homeless population across the state. On any given night, Michigan has a homeless population that exceeds 80,000 people, and it is imperative that tax credit dollars are dedicated to the creation of units that will assist this population and/or those with special needs.

Rural communities lag behind urban communities in so many areas but having individuals who are in need of affordable housing is not one of those areas. As the Executive Director of a rural community mental health agency, I can speak to the needs of the individuals who have mental illness and the lack of resources to assist this population.

For the State of Michigan to receive approximately \$200,000,000 annually from the federal government and not to set aside a large percentage of these funds to help the homeless and/or those with special needs is to disregard the poorest members of our society.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns. If you have any questions, please phone me at 269-273-5000 ext 308.

Respectfully,



Elizabeth O'Dell, LMSW
Executive Director

210 S. Main Street, Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-5000 Fax: (269) 273-8019 or Administration Fax: (269) 273-9456 Website: www.stjoecmh.org
Emergency Services 1-800-622-3967

In affiliation with:
Allegan County Community Mental Health Services • Kalamazoo Community Mental Health Services • Woodlands (Cass) Behavioral Healthcare Network